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The study on the attitudes towards the student selection system for
higher education in terms of student characteristics

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Abstract

This study aims at examining whether there was a significant difference between the attitude scores of the high school senior students who entered the student selection examinations for higher education in 2010 towards the examination and some of their characteristics. The study was carried out with 1116 students in Ankara province. The data was collected by means of “Student Survey” and “The Attitude Scale towards Student Selection Examination”, and analyzed by means of independent sample *t*-test and one-way variance analysis. At the end of the study, it was found that there was no significant difference among the attitude mean scores of the students towards the examination in terms of gender; the attitude scores of the students whose exam achievement scores were in the high score were more positive; there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students whose parents’ educational levels were different only according to the educational level of the father; the attitudes of the students who did not go to a private course and were pleased with the two-stage examination were more positive.

Key Words: Student Selection and Placement System for Higher Education, The Test for Entering Higher Education, Placement Tests for Undergraduate Programs, Attitude

1. Introduction

The system for entering higher education is one of the important issues debated in the field of education in Turkey. The main side of this debate in which educational stakeholders are interested is the students. The students have mostly been kept outside the debate and they were forced to accept the changes about the examination system. The interest for higher education and the fact that the number of the students willing to receive higher education is higher than the capacity of these institutions make this one of the important problems in the field of education in Turkey (ÜSYM, 1979; Özçelik, 1982; Aşkar, 1985; Baykul, 1989; Toker, 1997). Making appropriate choices that enable the students enter the desired higher education programs, coping with the exam anxiety and tiredness are among the main obstacles waiting for the students who enter the exam. All these usually exist as the problems that should be solved before the exam for the students who are about to enter the exam (Kutlu, 2006). This situation is influential on the attitudes of the students towards the student selection examination for higher education.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether there was a significant difference between the attitude scores of the high school senior students who entered the Test for Entering Higher Education and Placement Tests for Undergraduate Programs in 2010 towards the examination and some of their characteristics. The sub problems are as follows:

Do the attitude scores of the senior students differentiate significantly according to;

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1. gender,
2. the test achievements of their schools,
3. the educational levels of their parents,
4. their status of going to a private course or not and
5. their status of being pleased with the two-stage examination?

2. Material and Method

The Research Design of the Study

The descriptive research model was used in this study as the current situation was taken as it was (Karasar, 2007).

Study Group

The study was carried out with 1116 students enrolled at in the last year of 15 public high schools in the province of Ankara in Turkey.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study was collected by means of “The Student Survey” which was developed by Bal (2010) and in which the student characteristics were described and “The Attitude Scale towards the Student Selection Examination” which was developed by Ekici (2005) and aimed at revealing the attitudes of the students towards the examination for entering higher education.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, it was examined whether the scores obtained by means of “The Attitude Scale towards Student Selection Examination” differed significantly in terms of some characteristics (gender, the test achievements of their schools, the educational levels of their parents, their status of going to a private course or not and their status of being pleased with the two-stage examination) of the students obtained by means of “The Student Survey”. During the analysis, *t*-test and one-way variance analysis were used for independent samples (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001; Büyüköztürk, 2007).

3. Findings and Comments

This study focuses on the examination whether there was a significant different between the attitude scores of the senior students and some characteristics they had. In the following, the findings and comments are presented in terms of the sub problems.

1. *Do the attitude scores of the senior students of high school towards the student selection examination differ significantly according to the gender?*

Independent samples *t*-test was done in order to determine whether there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students towards the examination according to the gender. The results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The *t*-test Results of the Attitude Mean Scores of the Students According to the Gender

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	Sx	Df	t	p
The Mean Scores of the Attitudes	Female	665	34,57	8,10	1114	-1,97	0,049
	Male	451	35,55	8,18			

According to the Table 1, the attitude mean scores of the students towards the examination did not differ significantly according to the gender. This finding was in parallel with the findings of Ekici (2005).

2. *Do the attitude scores of the senior students of high school towards the student selection examination differ significantly according to the test achievements of their schools?*

The schools of the students who participated into the study were grouped as high, middle and low according to their test achievements. One-way variance analysis was used in order to determine whether there was a significant difference among the attitude score distribution of the students in these groups. The results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The ANOVA Results of the Attitude Scores of the Students towards the Examination According to the Test Achievements of the Schools They were Enrolled at

	Source of the Variance	Sum of the Squares (SS)	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Mean Squares (MS)	F Test Statistics (F)	p
The Mean Scores of the Attitudes	Between Groups	12689,98	2	6344,99	115,23	0,000*
	Within Groups	61286,73	1113	55,06		
	Total	73976,71	1115			

*p<0,01

According to the Table 2, the attitude scores of the students differed significantly according to the student selection test achievements of the schools. This indicated that the attitudes of the students at different level schools varied. Levene test was used in order to see whether the variance between the groups was equal in order to choose the multiple comparison test to determine the source of this difference between the attitude scores of the groups (Kirk, 1982); and it was found that the results were significant ($p < 0,01$). According to this, the hypothesis “ H_0 =Between groups variance was equal” was rejected. As the variance between the groups was not equal, Tamhane’s T2 Multiple Comparison Test was used in order to determine between which means there was a significant difference (Hochberg and Tamhane, 1987). At the end of the comparison test, the attitude mean scores of the students enrolled at the schools in high group ($\bar{X}=38,92$) differed significantly than the ones in schools in medium ($\bar{X}=35,66$) and low ($\bar{X}=30,81$) groups.

3. *Do the attitude scores of the senior students of high school towards student selection examination differ significantly according to the educational levels of their parents?*

One-way variance analysis was used in order to determine whether there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students towards the examination according to the educational levels of the students’ mothers. The results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The ANOVA Results of the Attitude Scores of the Students towards the Examination According to the Educational Levels of the Mothers

	Source of the Variance	Sum of the Squares (SS)	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Mean Squares (MS)	F Test Statistics (F)	p
The Mean Scores of the Attitudes	Between Groups	531,82	3	177,27	2,68	0,045
	Within Groups	73444,88	1112	66,05		
	Total	73976,71	1115			

*p>0,01

According to the Table 3, there was no significant difference among the attitude scores of the students whose mothers’ educational levels were different (illiterate, primary school graduate, secondary school graduate and university graduate) from each other. This indicated that the attitudes of the students whose mothers’ educational levels were different from each other did not change. When the attitude mean scores of the students were examined, it was seen that the students whose mothers were university graduates ($\bar{X}=34,49$), whose mothers were secondary school graduates ($\bar{X}=35,90$), whose mothers were primary school graduates ($\bar{X}=35,90$) and whose mothers were illiterate ($\bar{X}=32,50$) had mean scores that were close to each other. Although there was no statistically significant difference, it was striking that the mean scores of the students whose mothers were secondary school graduates was higher than the ones whose mothers were illiterate.

4. *Do the attitude scores of the senior students of high school towards the student selection examination differ significantly according to the educational levels of their fathers?*

One-way variance analysis was used in order to determine whether there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students towards the examination according to the educational levels of the students' fathers. The results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The ANOVA Results of the Attitude Scores of the Students towards the Examination According to the Educational Levels of the Fathers

	Source of the Variance	Sum of the Squares (SS)	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Mean Squares (MS)	F Test Statistics (F)	p
The Mean Scores of the Attitudes	Between Groups	820,97	3	273,66	4,16	0,006*
	Within Groups	73155,73	1112	65,79		
	Total	73976,71	1115			

*p<0,01

According to the Table 4, it was seen that there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students whose fathers' educational levels were different (illiterate, primary school graduate, secondary school graduate and university graduate) from each other. This indicated that the attitudes of the students whose fathers' educational levels were different from each other changed. Levene Test was used in order to see whether the variance between the groups was equal in order to choose the multiple comparison test to determine the source of this difference between the attitude scores of the groups; and it was found that the results were not significant ($p < 0,05$). According to this, the hypothesis " H_0 =Between groups variance was equal" could not be rejected. As the variance between the groups was equal, Scheffe Multiple Comparison Test was used in order to determine between which means there was a significant difference (Kirk, 1982). At the end of the comparison test, the attitude mean scores of the students whose fathers were university graduates ($\bar{X}=36,54$) differed significantly than the ones of the students whose fathers were secondary school graduates ($\bar{X}=34,30$) and the ones of the students whose fathers were primary school graduates ($\bar{X}=34,67$).

5. *Do the attitude scores of the senior students of high school towards the student selection examination differ significantly according to their status of going to a private course or not?*

Independent samples *t*-test was done in order to determine whether there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students towards the examination according to their status of going to a private course or not. The results were presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The *t*-test Results of the Attitude Mean Scores of the Students According to the Their Status of Going to a Private Course or Not

	The Status of Going to a Private Course	N	\bar{X}	Ss	df	t	p
The Mean Scores of the Attitudes	Going	281	33,04	8,06	1114	-4,63	0,000*
	Not going	835	35,61	8,07			

*p<0,01

According to the Table 5, the attitudes of the students towards the examination differed significantly according to their status of going to a private course or not ($t_{1114}=-4,63$; $p < 0,01$). The attitude mean scores of the students who did not go to a private course ($\bar{X}=35,61$) were higher than the ones of the students who went to a private course

($\bar{X}=33,04$). According to this, it could be claimed that the students who did not go to a private course had more positive attitudes towards the examination. This findings was in parallel with the findings of Baykul (1990), Morgil, Yılmaz and Geban (2001) and Ekici (2005).

6. *Do the attitude scores of the senior students of high school towards student selection examination differ significantly according to their status of being pleased with the two-stage examination?*

Independent samples *t*-test was done in order to determine whether there was a significant difference among the attitude scores of the students towards the examination according to their status of being pleased with the two-stage examination. The results were presented in Table 6.

Table 6. The *t*-test Results of the Attitude Mean Scores of the Students According to the Their Status of Being Pleased with the Two-Stage Examination

	The Status of Two-Stage Examination	N	\bar{X}	Ss	df	t	p
The Mean Scores of the Attitudes	Pleased	661	36,52	8,21	1112	7,913	0,000*
	Not pleased	453	32,69	7,51			

*p<0,01

According to the Table 6, the attitudes of the students towards the examination differed significantly according to their status of being pleased with the two-stage examination ($t_{1112}= 7,91$; $p<0,01$). The attitude mean scores of the students who were pleased with the two-stage examination ($\bar{X}=36,52$) were higher than the ones who were not pleased ($\bar{X}=32,69$). This indicated that the students who were pleased with the two-stage examination had more positive attitudes towards the examination.

Results and Recommendations

The results that could be reached through the findings of this study were as follows:

1. It was found that there was no significant difference between the attitude mean scores of the male and the female students towards the examination.
2. It was found that there was a significant difference among the attitude mean scores of the schools whose test achievements were at high, medium and low levels. According to this the attitude mean scores of the students enrolled at the schools at high levels differed significantly than the ones of the students enrolled at the schools at medium and low levels.
3. As for the educational levels of the mothers, there was no significant difference among the attitude mean scores of the students whose mothers were illiterate, primary school graduates, secondary school graduates and university graduates.
4. As for the educational levels of the fathers, it was seen that there was a significant difference among the attitude mean scores of the students whose fathers were illiterate, primary school graduates, secondary school graduates and university graduates. The attitude mean scores of the students whose fathers were university graduates differed significantly than the ones of the students whose fathers were primary school and secondary school graduates.
5. There was a significant difference between the attitude mean scores of the students who went to a private school and who did not. According to this finding, it could be claimed that the students who did not go to a private course had more positive attitudes towards the examination.
6. There was a significant difference among the students according to their status of being pleased with the two-stage examination or not. The attitude mean scores of the students who were pleased with the two-stage examination were higher than the ones of the students who were not pleased.

The following recommendations could be made in the light of the findings of this study.

1. It could be researched which factors cause the difference among the attitude mean scores of the students who are enrolled at schools whose test achievements are different from each other.
2. Although the attitude mean scores did not differ according to the educational level of the mothers, it differed according to the educational levels of the fathers. The studies on the causes of this situation could be carried out.
3. It was found in this study that the attitude mean scores of the students who did not go to a private course were higher than the ones who went to a private course. Therefore, studies on the effects of private courses on the attitudes of the students towards the examination could be carried out.
4. More comprehensive studies on the effects of the two-stage examination on the education could be carried out.

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